

Message Text

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51

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 SAJ-01 ACDA-05 EUR-12 /080 W

----- 087126

R 280916Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4738

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

COMUSMACTHAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOM 9679

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, US

SUBJ: U.S. PRESENCE IN THAILAND

1. WE GAINED AN UNEXPECTED DEFENDER MAY 27. EX-FOREIGN MINISTER THANAT KHOMAN WAS ONE OF FIVE PANELISTS FOR A UNION FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES DISCUSSION TITLED "THAILAND AND THE INDOCHINA CRISIS." THANAT, WHO JUST OVER A YEAR AGO INTRODUCED AN ABORTIVE BILL IN THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY TO REGULATE FOREIGN TROOP PRESENCE IN THAILAND, HARKENED BACK TO HIS FRENCH EDUCATION TO QUOTE THE AXIOM "DON'T TAKE SHADOWS FOR REALITY."

2. THANAT POINTED OUT THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD BEEN A FRIEND OF THAILAND FOR OVER A HUNDRED YEARS, WHEREAS NORTH VIETNAM NEVER HAD BEEN. HE RECALLED THAT PEOPLE HAD CRITICIZED HIM FOR BEING AN AMERICAN
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PUPPET, AND LATER ON FOR BEING ANTI-AMERICAN, BUT HE

STRESSED THAT HE WAS ONLY A REALIST. HE ASKED WHY THE RTG WAS INSISTING ON AMERICAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT EXAMINING THE UTILITY TO THAILAND OF AMERICAN DEPARTURE. HE ASKED RHETORICALLY WHETHER THE RTG WAS DEMANDING AS A QUID PRO QUO THAT NORTH VIETNAM REDUCE ITS SUPPORT TO THE INSURGENCY.

3. THANAT SAID THAT THE UPCOMING SUPERPOWER COMPETITION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION, CHINA, AND THE UNITED STATES, WITH THE POSSIBLE ADDITION OF JAPAN, HAD GREATER IMPLICATIONS FOR THAILAND'S FUTURE THAN WHATEVER NORTH VIETNAM WOULD BE DOING.

4. COMMENT. IN HIS OPENING REMARKS THANAT UNCONVINCINGLY LAMENTED THE ABSENCE FROM THE PANEL OF FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN. THANAT'S OBSERVATIONS ON THE UNSEEMLY RTG HASTE TO WORK OUT A MODUS VIVENDI WITH HANOI IMPLIED CRITICISM OF CHATCHAI. ADDITIONALLY THANAT DELIGHTS IN BLOWING A COUNTERVAILING WIND. HIS COMMENTS ON THE U.S. PRESENCE NEVERTHELESS ILLUSTRATE TWO PRINCIPAL POINTS WHICH MANY THINKING THAI SHARE: WHY ABANDON AN OLD ALLY? AND IF YOU DECIDE TO DO SO, TRY TO OBTAIN COMPENSATION FROM A TRADITIONAL ENEMY IN THE PROCESS. WHITEHOUSE

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Message Attributes

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